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ditions existing in particular years. As an example I will cite the differences of the mean yearly pressures observed at Cheyenne and San Francisco. The smallest figures are those of 1878 and 1889, years of minima of sunspots. The largest difference occurs in 1893, a year of maximum of sunspots. One may ask in what particulars the annual variation of atmospheric pressure in 1893 was different from the average.

As we have seen, the annual ebb and flow of the atmosphere over the North American continent is a phenomenon far less complicated than it seemed to be. We may hope therefore that it will not be too difficult to discern the superposition of abnormal waves, due to the variations of solar activity, upon the normal waves due to the changes of the seasons.

DOBBS FERRY, N. Y., June 23, 1912.

SCOTT'S LAST EXPEDITION: A REVIEW[*]

By WILLIAM HERBERT HOBBS

Eight years ago, after the return of Scott's first expedition, appeared "The Voyage of the 'Discovery'" in two large volumes. This was followed in 1910 by the report of the British expedition under Lieut., now Sir Ernest Shackleton, likewise in two volumes of similar size entitled "The Heart of the Antarctic." The two new volumes which describe Scott's second and last expedition maintain the form and the general external appearance of their predecessors, though surpassing them—as they do, indeed, all other reports of similar purpose—in the perfection and the beauty of their illustrations.

Taken together these six volumes of narrative and scientific observation are without a rival and should be the cause of just pride for every compatriot of the great leaders, Scott and Shackleton.

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[*] Scott's Last Expedition: Vol. I Being the Journals of Captain R. F. Scott (xxiv and 446 pp); Vol. II Being the Reports of the Journeys and the Scientific Work Undertaken by Dr. E. A. Wilson and the Surviving Members of the Expedition (xvi and 376 pp.) Maps, ills , index. Arranged by Leonard Huxley with a preface by Sir Clements R. Markham. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1913. $10.00. 9½ x 6½.

The heroic endeavors and the tragic fate of Scott and his companions, Wilson, Oates, Bowers and Evans, are already known to everyone; and the full story of their fateful polar journey was awaited as has been no other report in the long history of exploration. In advance of the appearance of the work in English, the rights of translation of this story were secured for a great number of foreign languages.

Volume I, which is devoted exclusively to the diary of Captain Scott, has wisely been left by the editor with little change, even though the parts which precede the eventful polar journey are somewhat diffuse and would probably have been considerably revised by their author before publication. The diary of the polar journey confirms, it must be frankly admitted, the impression that the expedition was not only peculiarly marked by untoward circumstances, such as the unusually inclement summer and the early break of the succeeding winter, but quite as much by a persistent belief, in the face of much evidence to the contrary, that ponies are superior to dogs as traction animals on polar journeys. Whatever may have been the views in the past, the comparative logs of the Amundsen and Scott polar journeys, having all due regard to differences in weather conditions encountered, have definitely settled this question. How the English polar party met each succeeding reverse without complaint, and how they struggled on to their almost certain fate, is told in the simple and modest language of a truly great man and explorer. The wresting from them of the prize for which they had struggled took the heart out of the party and must have meant a distinct loss of speed upon the homeward journey. It is much more than probable that this disheartenment lost them at least the eleven miles which were necessary to reach the One Ton Depot in advance of the great blizzard which finally wrecked the expedition. A few lines from the diary tell the story:

"Jan. 16 . . . . The worst has happened; or nearly the worst. We marched well in the morning and covered 7½ miles. Noon sight showed us in Lat. 89° 42′ S., and we started off in high spirits in the afternoon, feeling that tomorrow would see us at our destination. About the second hour of the March Bowers' sharp eyes detected what we thought was a cairn; he was uneasy about it, but argued that it must be a sastrugus. Half an hour later he detected a black speck ahead. Soon we knew that this could not be a natural snow feature. We marched on, found that it was a black flag tied to a sledge bearer; nearby the remains of a camp; sledge tracks and ski tracks going and coming and the clear trace of dogs' paws—

many dogs. This told us the whole story. The Norwegians had forestalled us and are first at the Pole. It is a terrible disappointment, and I am very sorry for my loyal companions. Many thoughts come and much discussion have we had. Tomorrow we must march on to the Pole and then hasten home with all the speed we can compass. All the day dreams must go; it will be a wearisome return'' (pp. 373-374).

Nowhere in the diary is there a suggestion that the ''butting in'' of the Norwegians at the last moment upon territory which the unwritten traditions of exploration had preempted for the British expedition until their attempt had been made, was other than entirely sportsmanlike. Whatever their feelings, the members of the expedition, and the British nation as well, have maintained a most discreet and praiseworthy attitude.

Scott's diary indicates that he was apprehensive lest the cairns and depots which had been set up along the course might be missed upon the return; and the difficulties encountered during the earlier stages served only to increase his anxiety. The remarkably keen vision of Lieut. Bowers more than once saved the party, sometimes after the cairn had been passed. Amundsen's more elaborate precautions of setting up transverse series of snow cairns at frequent intervals along the route would thus appear to be necessary to insure safety on such journeys over a featureless plain subject to violent storms.

The death of Captain Scott having left us with no summary report upon the polar journey, we must perforce cull the isolated scientific observations from his narrative of toil and hardship, and the greatest interest naturally centers upon the vicinity of the pole which has only once before been entered. Amundsen's sojourn south of lat. 89° S. had indicated it to be an area of light and variable winds and generally good weather, in contrast to the strong southerly winds which descend the ice slope toward the margins of the plateau area. It is thus interesting to find that Scott's observations made about a month later led him to similar and independent conclusions. He reports that the sky in the near-polar region was often overcast, and that the clouds ''don't seem to come from anywhere, form and disperse without visible reason. The meteorological conditions seem to point to an area of variable light winds.'' During much of the time fine snow crystals were falling but with the sun not obscured. The fallen snow is not compacted, but is soft ''as deep as you like to dig down.'' A similar observation to this was made by Amundsen. Farther out toward the margin of the inland ice the earlier observations have indicated a distinct stratification of the snow with thin hard crusts separating thicker layers of soft material.

Upon the return journey a halt was made to examine the mountain rampart at the upper end of the Beardmore Glacier outlet, and specimens of coal containing distinct plant impressions were secured from the Beacon sandstone formation. At the special request of Dr. Wilson, these specimens were not abandoned even when every pound of burden caused delay in what became a race for life against cold and starvation. These fossils should fix the geological age of the great sandstone formation of the region, but as yet they have not been reported upon.

Volume II includes reports upon various sub-expeditions, beginning with that of Wilson, Bowers and Cherry-Garrard made in the midst of winter to the penguin rookery at Cape Crozier, in order to secure eggs during the breeding season and, upon embryological grounds, to learn the relationship of the emperor penguins. In view of the severe weather encountered this was one of the hardest sledging journeys upon record. It lasted for five weeks and for much of the time air temperatures were below —50° F. with a minimum of —77° F. There follows the report of Lieut. Campbell upon the Northern Expedition which wintered at Cape Adare, and, unexpectedly, owing to a failure of the *Terra Nova* to take off the party, a second winter was passed in an igloo near the foot of the Reeves Glacier on the western shore of the Ross Sea. The party suffered great hardships, being compelled to subsist in their snow cave upon seal and penguin for the most part. In the spring they rescued themselves by a sledge journey across the sea ice to headquarters at Cape Evans.

Two expeditions to the westward of McMurdo Sound and Ross Sea were made under the direction of Mr. Griffith Taylor, the chief geologist of the expedition; by the use of theodolite and plane table an excellent map was prepared to replace the reconnaissance map made by Ferrar of the earlier Scott expedition. This map is undoubtedly the most accurate and satisfactory of any that has yet been prepared in the Antarctic. A number of new glaciers are described, and valuable glaciological and physiographical data were secured and are discussed by Taylor and Debenham in special sections of the volume. Special studies of ice physics were made by Wright, and extended meteorological data were collected by Simpson. A summary of biological work carried out on board the *Terra Nova* is supplied by Lillie.

Dr. Simpson, the meteorologist of the expedition, upon the basis of his observations has reached the conclusion that the blizzards which are so severe at Cape Evans and along the route of the polar party, are local and restricted to the western margin of the Great Ross Barrier. His explanation, sketched in outline only, is that the refrigeration of the air by the Ross Barrier produces an area of high pressure above it, and that this air tending to flow northward toward the area of lower pressure lying over the Ross Sea, is deflected westward in consequence of earth rotation and so made to pass northward over McMurdo Sound where it meets the mountain ranges in Victoria Land. In the opinion of the reviewer this theory fails to take account of the severe blizzards encountered by the Shackleton party (and by the Scott party as well) upon the ice plateau, the proven centrifugal distribution of winds about this plateau, and the change of wind direction at the British winter stations during the progress of a blizzard.

In conclusion one is tempted to mention again the exceptional beauty of the illustrations in these two volumes, largely to be ascribed to the remarkable skill of Mr. Herbert G. Ponting, the photographer of the expedition.